which God himself designed. Poets seek for beauty in the mythology of the Greeks, the Persians, the Romans—the beliefs of the Pharaos are brought to light, the mythus of India exhumed, Babylon and Nineve yield up their treasures—yet the beauty of all these combined can not compare with the beauty of Catholic belief. The Catholic poet who understands his religion, and comprehends its beauty, has at his hand a nobler store than is comprised in all the treasures of pagan mythology. It is the House of Beauty, the Temple of Truth, the Abode of Love, since God, its Author is Himself Beauty, Truth and Love.

It is with the latter aspect of our holy faith that we are at present concerned. Out of the fullness of love, flows sweetest consolation, and than the doctrine of Purgatory, what belief can be more consoling? "The holiest charity is that of prayer for the poor souls," says one who was herself a Saint, and this especial aspect of our faith is one little understood by the world at large. The better understood the more consoling it will appear, and the more appreciated. In like manner, the greater will be the gain to those in prison. As knowledge of this devotion becomes diffused it will be observed how perfect is God's love for His children, how tenderly on earth, in Heaven, and in the place of Purification. He hath ordained that we may mutually help each other to a condition of greater holiness and more perfect love.

Without this warmth of Christian hope there is an unutterable sadness in the elegaic poetry of modern production. Milton, "the mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies," presents in "Lycidas," a polished inanimate statue, fair of face, exquisitely round of form, but without any informing hope. He says indeed, that Lycides is not dead, that heaven has received him, and represents the very Saints of God as entertaining him in the courts above. Yet, we may urge that this savors too much of the modern Protestant funeral sermon that invariably ends by placing the soul of the dead person on the right hand of God—an honor conferred without any purification, or even preparation, on the part of the departed soul. Gray, in his "Elegy in a Country Church Yard," asks:

"Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the cold, dull ear of death?"

These are questions such as might have been asked by any pagan of old. Marcus Aurelius, in fact, several times, delivers utterances similar. Nearly two thousand years before, that pagan philosopher declared:

"Look down from above on the countless herds of men, their countless solemnities, their infinitely varied voyagings in storms and calms, and the differences among those who are born, who live together, and die. Consider, too, the lives lived before thee, and the lives that will be lived after thee, and how many even know not thy name, and how many will soon forget it, and how they who perhaps now are praising thee, will very soon blame thee, and that neither a posthumous name is of any value, nor anything else."

Could sadder, more hopeless words be uttered? And yet, with centuries of warm, life-giving Christianity behind him, Gray sums it all up into one line of indescribably poignant pain—

"The path of glory leads but to the grave."

When he meditates it is like a pagan, not like a Christian. It is a mere prompting of nature which urges him to exclaim:

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live the wonted fires."

Had Gray been a Catholic, his immortal "Elegy" were possessed of